



General Key Terms

Definitions specific to individual protocols are found in the respective protocol.

Term	Definition
Active Surveillance Culture/Testing (ASC/AST)	For purposes of NHSN surveillance, Active Surveillance Culture/Testing (ASC/AST) refers to testing that is intended to identify the presence/carriage of microorganisms for the purpose of instituting or discontinuing isolation precautions (for example, nasal swab for MRSA, rectal swab for VRE), or monitoring for eradication of a carrier state. ASC/AST does NOT include identification of microorganisms with cultures or tests performed for diagnosis and treatment purposes (for example, specimens collected from sterile body sites including blood specimens). Also, see Surveillance cultures .
Apnea	See Vital Signs.
Aseptically obtained	Specimen obtained in a manner to prevent introduction of organisms from the surrounding tissues.
Birthweight	Weight of the infant <u>at the time of birth</u> . Birthweight should not be changed as the infant gains weight. The NHSN birthweight categories are as follows: A = ≤750 g; B = 751-1000 g; C = 1001-1500 g; D = 1501-2500 g; E = >2500 g.
CDC location	<p>A CDC-defined designation given to a patient care area housing patients who have similar disease conditions or who are receiving care for similar medical or surgical specialties. Each facility location that is monitored is “mapped” to one CDC Location. The specific CDC Location code is determined by the type of patients cared for in that area according to the 80% Rule. The 80% Rule requires that 80% of the patients in a location are of a certain acuity level and service type (for example, if 80% of the patients in a ward level area are pediatric patients receiving orthopedic care, this area should be designated as an Inpatient Pediatric Orthopedic Ward). When mapping facility locations to CDC locations, use the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acuity billing data (if available) is the most reliable and objective method of determining appropriate location mapping.• Admission/transfer diagnosis can also be used to determine location mapping if billing data is not available.• When possible, facilities should use one year’s worth of data to make this determination. If that is not available, a shorter period of at least



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	<p>3 months is acceptable, but every effort should be made to collect and analyze greater periods of time consistently in the future, using the same method.</p> <p>Also, see Virtual Location in the Locations and Descriptions chapter.</p> <p>For detailed instructions on how to map locations, see “Instructions for Mapping Patient Care Locations in NHSN” in the Locations and Descriptions chapter.</p>
Clinical correlation	<p>Physician documentation of antimicrobial treatment for site-specific infection related to equivocal findings (not clearly identified) of infection on imaging test.</p> <p>For example, when applying intraabdominal infection (IAB) criterion 3b, the finding of ‘fluid collection seen in the lower abdominal cavity’ on an imaging test, may or may not represent an infection. This finding is not clearly identified as an infection and should be confirmed with clinical evidence that an infection is present. In the case of IAB criterion 3b, the clinical evidence required is physician documentation of antimicrobial therapy for treating the intraabdominal infection.</p>
Date of event (DOE)	<p>The date the first element used to meet an NHSN site-specific infection criterion occurs for the first time within the seven-day infection window period or SSI surveillance period. <i>Synonyms: infection date, date of infection, event date.</i></p> <p>In the case of a process measure, the date the process or intervention was performed (for example, the day a central line was inserted is the date of CLIP event).</p> <p>This definition does not apply to LabID event, or VAE. See Date of event for VAE, SSI, and LabID Event in respective protocols.</p>
Days present	<p>The denominator days present is only used in the AUR Module. See Antimicrobial Use and Resistance (AUR) Module.</p>
Device-associated infection	<p>An infection meeting the HAI definition is considered a device-associated HAI (for example, associated with the use of a ventilator, central line, or indwelling urinary catheter) if the device was in place for >2 calendar days on the date of event and was also in place on the date of event or the day before.</p> <p>If the device was in place for >2 calendar days and then removed, the date of event must be the day of discontinuation or the next day to be device associated. For a patient who has a central line in place on hospital</p>



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	admission, day of first inpatient access is considered Device Day 1. For a patient who has a ventilator or urinary catheter in place on the day of admission, Device Day 1 is day of admission.
Device days	A count of the number of patients with a specific device in a patient care location during a time period. This count can be determined electronically or manually by a daily count or weekly sampling. See Denominator Data section within individual protocols.
Died	The patient died during the current facility admission.
Event contributed to death	The event either directly caused death or exacerbated an existing disease condition that then led to death as evidenced by available documentation (for example, death/discharge note, autopsy report, etc.).
Event date	See Date of event.
Fever	See Vital signs.
Gross anatomical exam	<p>Evidence of infection elicited or visualized on physical examination or observed during an invasive procedure. This includes physical examination of a patient during admission and subsequent assessments of the patient. Additionally, it may include findings noted during a medical/invasive procedure and is dependent on the location of the infection as well as the NHSN infection criterion.</p> <p>Examples of acceptable findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An invasive procedure to visualize an intraabdominal abscess. • Visualization of pus or purulent drainage from drains within an abscess. • Abdominal pain elicited on physical exam (without an invasive procedure) post-CSEC or hysterectomy, is sufficient evidence of infection detected.
Healthcare-associated infection (HAI)	<p>An infection is considered a HAI if the date of event of the NHSN site-specific infection criterion occurs on or after the 3rd calendar day of admission to an inpatient location where day of admission to an inpatient location is calendar day 1. See Identifying HAIs chapter.</p> <p>Note: Rules for HAI do not apply to SSI, VAE, or LabID Events.</p>
Hypotension	See Vital signs.



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Infant	A patient who is ≤ 1 year (≤ 365 days) of age.
Infection date	See Date of Event.
Infection window period (IWP)	The 7 days during which all site-specific infection criteria must be met. It includes the date the first positive diagnostic test that is used as an element of the site-specific infection criterion was obtained, the 3 calendar days before, and the 3 calendar days after.
Inpatient location	See Location.
In-plan surveillance	Facility has indicated in their NHSN Monthly Reporting Plan that the NHSN surveillance protocol(s) will be used, in its entirety, for that particular HAI event type. Only in-plan data are submitted to CMS in accordance with CMS's Quality Reporting Programs and are included in NHSN annual reports or other NHSN publications.
Intensive care unit (ICU)	<p>Also known as a Critical Care Unit, the ICU is a nursing care area that provides intensive observation, diagnostic and therapeutic procedures for adults and/or children who are critically ill. An ICU excludes nursing areas that provide step-down, intermediate care or telemetry only. Specialty care areas are also excluded (see definition).</p> <p>The type of ICU is determined by the type of patients cared for in that unit according to the 80% Rule –which means 80% of the patients in a location are of a certain type. For example, if 80% of the patients in an area are patients receiving critical care for trauma, this area should be designated as an Inpatient Trauma Critical Care Unit. When an ICU houses roughly equal populations of medical and surgical patients (a 50/50 to 60/40 mix), it is called a medical/surgical ICU.</p>
Location	<p>The patient care area to which a patient is assigned while receiving care in the healthcare facility.</p> <p>Note: Only mapped inpatient locations where denominator data are collected can be used for attribution and reporting infection events via the Device-associated Module. Operating rooms (including cardiac catheter labs, C-section rooms, and interventional radiology), emergency departments and outpatient locations are not valid locations for attribution of device-associated infection events (see Location of Attribution). Also, see CDC Location.</p>



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Location of attribution (LOA)	<p>The inpatient location where the patient was assigned on the date of event (see also Date of Event and Transfer Rule terms). Non-bedded patient locations, (for example, PACU or OR) are not eligible for assignment of location of attribution for HAI events. Location of attribution must be a location where denominator data can be collected. See individual HAI protocol(s) for additional details.</p>
Neonate	<p>A patient who is ≤ 30 days of age.</p>
Non-culture based microbiologic testing	<p>Identification of microorganisms using a method of testing other than a culture. Culture based testing require inoculation of a specimen to culture media, incubation and observation for actual growth of microorganisms. Depending on the organism identified, culturing can take several days to weeks for a final report. In contrast, non-culture based testing methods generally provide faster results, which can assist with early diagnosis and tailoring of antimicrobial therapy. Examples of non-culture based testing include but are not limited to PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and ELISA (Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay).</p> <p>With the exception of Active Surveillance Culture/Testing (ASC/AST), any test methodology (culture or non-culture based) that provides a final laboratory report in the medical record and identifies an organism, is eligible for use in meeting an NHSN infection definition.</p>
Off-plan surveillance	<p>Facility has not indicated in their NHSN Monthly Reporting Plan that the NHSN surveillance protocol(s) will be used, in its entirety, for that particular HAI event type. Off-plan data are not submitted to CMS in accordance with CMS’s Quality Reporting Programs and are not included in NHSN annual reports or other NHSN publications.</p>
Patient days	<p>A count of the number of patients in a patient care location during a defined time period. This count can be determined electronically or manually by a daily count or, depending on the location type, weekly sampling. See Denominator Data section within individual protocols.</p>
Present on admission (POA)	<p>An infection with meeting an NHSN site-specific infection criterion] with a date of event that occurs on the day of admission to an inpatient location (calendar day 1), the 2 days before admission, or the calendar day after admission (POA time period). See Identifying HAIs chapter.</p> <p>Note: Rules for POA do not apply to SSI, VAE, or LabID Events.</p>



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Repeat infection timeframe (RIT)	<p>The 14-day timeframe during which no new infections of the same type are reported.</p> <p>Rules for applying RIT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies to both POA and HAI event determinations.• The date of event is Day 1 of the 14-day RIT.• If criteria for the same type of infection are met and the date of event is within the 14-day RIT, a new event is not identified or reported.• Additional pathogens recovered during the RIT from the same type of infection are added to the event and the original date of event is maintained as is the original 14-day RIT.• Device association determination and location of attribution are not amended.• Do not apply to SSI, VAE, or LabID Events. <p>See Identifying HAIs chapter.</p>
Secondary BSI attribution period (SBAP)	<p>The period in which a blood specimen must be collected for a secondary bloodstream infection to be attributed to a primary site infection. This period includes the Infection Window Period (IWP) combined with the Repeat Infection Timeframe (RIT) for the primary type of infection. It is 14-17 days in length depending upon the date of event.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secondary BSI Attribution Period does not apply to VAE or LabID Events.• The Secondary BSI Attribution Period for SSI is a 17-day period that includes the date of event of the SSI, 3 days prior to the date of event, and 13 days after the SSI date of event.
Standardized Infection Ratio (SIR)	<p>Summary measure used to track HAIs over time. It compares the number of reported HAIs to the number of predicted HAIs, based on NHSN baseline data. The SIR adjusts for several factors that may impact the risk of acquiring an HAI. See the SIR Guide for more information.</p>
Surveillance cultures	<p>Those cultures reported as part of a facility's infection prevention and control surveillance are not used in patient diagnosis and treatment. Surveillance cultures include but not limited to stool cultures for vancomycin-resistant <i>Enterococci</i> (VRE) and/or nasal swabs for methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (MRSA) surveillance. These cultures are also called active surveillance cultures or testing (ASC/AST).</p>



Term	Definition
	<p>Note: Positive cultures collected from sterile body sites including blood specimens are not surveillance cultures and are eligible for use in meeting NHSN HAI, LabID, VAE, and SSI event criteria. Also, see Active Surveillance Culture/Testing (ASC/AST).</p>
<p>Teaching hospital</p>	<p>NHSN defines three types of teaching hospitals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major: Facility has a program for medical students and post-graduate medical training. • Graduate: Facility has a program for post-graduate medical training (residency and/or fellowships). • Undergraduate: Facility has a program for medical / nursing students only.
<p>Temperature</p>	<p>See Vital signs.</p>
<p>Temperature instability</p>	<p>See Vital signs.</p>
<p>Transfer rule</p>	<p>The process of assigning location of attribution when the date of event is on the date of transfer or discharge, or the next day; the infection is attributed to the transferring/discharging location. If the patient was housed in multiple locations within the transfer rule time frame, attribute the infection to the first location in which the patient was housed the day before the infection's date of event.</p>
<p>Vital signs</p>	<p>Clinical measurements used to assess a patient's essential body functions. If a specific vital sign parameter is <u>not</u> stated in a CDC/NHSN HAI definition or criterion (for example, hypotension and temperature instability) the facility should use the vital sign parameter(s) as stated in its policies and procedures for clinical practices.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For fever, NHSN <u>does have a stated value</u>; the facility should use the temperature documented in the patient's medical record. There is no conversion of temperature based on route of collection. • For apnea in ventilated patients < 1 year of age, apnea cannot be determined by changes /adjustments in ventilator settings or by worsening oxygenation.